

## TEHIP

What do I remember most from my trip to Rufiji and Morogoro? The hippo who bumped our little ferry as we crossed the river in the dark? The romance of sleeping in a tent under the starry sky, listening to tales of lions? Two things – but not those.

First, the enthusiasm and dedication of everyone associated with TEHIP from the Permanent Secretary, Ms. Miriam J. Mwaffisi, to the young statisticians working away at their computers. Second, the fact that the District Commissioner in Rufiji, Mr. Al Haji Issa Lembuya, had spent several months at IDRC studying scientific writing. The former I hoped for and expected, the latter was quite a surprise and a wonderful reminder of the reach of IDRC's mission, many years on. I had not expected to talk about Ottawa winters on the District Commissioner's porch overlooking a green lawn that in the dark of night served as dinner to hippos.

I was accompanied on this wonderful visit by three IDRC Governors: Dr. Octavio Gómez-Dantes, Dr. Dan Martin, and Ms. Paulynn Sicam. Dr. Gómez-Dantes is Director of Health Policies and Planning for the Center for Health Systems Research in Mexico. He came away from TEHIP with many ideas that he felt were quite applicable to Mexico. Dr. Martin and Ms. Sicam were equally impressed. With the Governors and me were our Regional Director based in Nairobi and Executive Director of TEHIP, Dr. Eva Rathgeber, as well as the Canadian High Commissioner to Tanzania, Mr. Wayne Hammond, and the CIDA Representative in Dar Es Salaam, Mr. Brian Proskurniak.

Dr. Peter Kilima said in his editorial in the first volume of this newsletter, "as a butterfly cannot fly with one wing, likewise development cannot be achieved without research". TEHIP impressed us by the breadth of the vision and the courage of its implementers – the team which includes the frontline health care providers, as well as the community and, of course, the researchers. Government officials from the local level to Madame Mwaffisi, the Permanent Secretary, received us warmly.

To hear about the practical and effective way in which the TEHIP social scientists use the tool of Participatory Rural Appraisal to solicit the voice of the people and then pass the data to the District Health Management Team and subsequently along the chain to the planners, the District Council and the TEHIP operations committee was an eye-opener for us all.

We were gratified to see the expanding use of the insecticide-treated anti-malaria bed nets – another outcome of IDRC-supported work. We could understand very well the impact of practical improvements like the new e-mail for health workers, and, for communities, the clean, well-organized and stocked dispensaries.

The innovations of the demographic surveillance system and its multiple applications in the hands of a highly motivated health team augur well for improvements in the lives of people in Rufiji and Morogoro.

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As TEHIP researchers analyse the project data, and as the benefits to people's health are documented, I know that the Governors who visited will be eager to tell the TEHIP story – not only in Africa but in the Philippines, Mexico, America, and Canada. This joint initiative of national and local governments is of great interest in other countries.

TEHIP has all the building blocks for positive change – deep conviction to organize health services directly related to people's illness, good teamwork, innovative governance, and new approaches to financing. IDRC Governors are proud to be a part of Tanzania's forward-looking reforms – and were delighted to learn from Dr. Harun Kasale, Dr. Graham Reid, Dr. Don de Savigny and all the others who so kindly hosted us.

Maureen O'Neil  
Ottawa  
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